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ABSTRACT

A total of 450 video reviews in three journals, published in 1991, were randomly selected and examined through a content analysis, described and compared. This study was undertaken to answer the following questions: What do these journals provide for librarians who have to make informed decisions on video purchases? What criteria do the journals use to evaluate a video? Are there vital differences between reviews in different journals? "The Video Rating Guide for Libraries" makes reference to editing in over 75 percent of its reviews; the other two did not come close to this rate. "The Guide" also delivered substantially longer reviews written by people with a broad range of expertise. The reviewers of "Booklist" made more comparisons between the video under examination and those previously reviewed. An appendix presents codes for content analysis. (Contains 17 tables and 25 references.) (Author/SLD)

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**Video Reviews: A Content Analysis of Selections
Appearing in The Video Rating Guide for Libraries,
Booklist and Library Journal for 1991**

A Master's Research Paper submitted to the
Kent State University School of Library Science
in partial fulfillment of the requirements
for the degree Master of Library Science

by

Jennifer Lynn Joynt

May, 1994

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Abstract

The objective of this study was to describe and compare the reviews of video in **The Video Rating Guide for Libraries**, **Booklist** and **Library Journal**. A total of four hundred and fifty video reviews in all three journals, published in 1991, were randomly selected and examined by means of a content analysis. This study was undertaken to answer the following questions: What do these journals provide for librarians who have to make informed decisions on video purchases? What criteria do the journals use to evaluate a video? Are there vital differences between reviews in different journals? Results showed no major differences in the reviewing of the three journals, although **The Video Rating Guide for Libraries** did deliver substantially longer reviews written by people with a broad range of expertise.

Master's Research Paper

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B.A., Bowling Green State University, 1990

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I

INTRODUCTION

Videos and videocassette recorders (VCR's) have become a mainstay in America's educational and entertainment diet. Few would contest that the video age is upon us. This vastly expanding electronic phenomenon is literally a revolution. Over 92 million, or 98 percent, of all American households own at least one television.¹ Scholtz reports that U.S. homes with VCRs totaled 35 million in 1988.² Not only do many American households have at least one VCR, but school systems and businesses are also making use of video technology. Today, there is scarcely an American library, whether it be school, public, academic or special, that doesn't contain at least a small collection of videos to serve its VCR owning clientele. In fact, over 50 percent of American libraries established a video collection by 1987.³ Still other U.S. libraries reported that videos accounted for 20-30 percent of their total

¹Mark Hoffman, ed., The World Almanac and Book of Facts 1993. (New York, N.Y.: Pharos Books, 1992), 305.

²James C. Scholtz, Developing and Maintaining Video Collections in Libraries (Santa Barbara, Ca.: ABC-CLIO, 1989), 196.

³Randy Pitman, "Pushing Pause: Hesitation About the Video Revolution," Library Journal 114 (Nov. 15, 1989): 36.

circulation.⁴

Video's arrival in the American library has been met with mixed reactions. Many librarians feel that video is competing with the book as both a source of entertainment and information; they hope that video's popularity is only a fad. However, there are those who favor video, saying that it is an important educational medium. Video advocates assert that it is a means, much like books-on-tape, which encourages patrons to frequent the library more. Studies regarding public video lending show that libraries draw new patrons after creating a strong video collection. For instance, a *Library Journal* survey revealed that almost 70 percent of the responding libraries felt "the availability of videocassettes in their libraries increased library patronage."⁵

Some years back, people felt that audio cassettes would be passe. Now, not only are the books-on-tape and music audio cassette collections expanding, but compact discs are adding another dimension to the audio collection. An expansion of video collections is inevitable. Randy Pitman, the publisher and editor of *Video Librarian*, warns those individuals lamenting video's introduction to the library by saying, "libraries will either adapt to the modern world or watch their doors gather

⁴Hanna DeVries, "Video Materials in the Public Library," *Bibliotheek en Samenleving* 14 (June 1986): 194-195.

⁵Loretta L. Lettner, "Video Cassettes in Libraries," *Library Journal* 110 (November 15, 1985): 35.

dust."⁶ Joseph Palmer, an Associate Professor of Information and Library Studies at the State University of New York at Buffalo, feels very enthusiastic about the promise videos provide bored brains. Palmer states that public libraries are "finding themselves revitalized as their communities, hungry for videos, turn to them to help meet a burgeoning need and desire for audiovisual information and recreation."⁷ Like books, videos are very powerful instruments that can educate, enlighten, provoke thought and entertain; video's power lies in the quality of the work, not in the medium itself.

Why has video's popularity soared within the past ten years? Some of the biggest reasons are: (1) it's a visual medium, (2) a large number of people can experience it simultaneously, (3) to operate it requires only a television with VCR hook up, (4) it is easy to handle and transport, (5) the necessary time investment is considerably shorter than that of other informational formats such as books and journals, and (6) price for videos is, on average, decreasing.⁸ (The Bowker Annual shows a Table of U.S. Nonprint Media based on selected issues of Choice, School Library Journal, and Booklist, the

⁶Pitman, "Pushing Pause," 37.

⁷Joseph Palmer, "Reference, Selection, and Current-Awareness Tools for the Video Librarian," Public Libraries 29 (May-June 1990): 162-163.

⁸The Bowker Annual Of Library and Book Trade Information, 38th Ed. Edited by Catherine Barr. (United States: R. R. Bowker, 1993), 489.

listed average price of a video was \$240.16 in 1987. By 1992 this cost dropped to \$112.92, a substantial difference.) Speaking to the popularity of video, Scholtz concisely surmises that:

Today we live in an electronic age...more and more adults now only know a world that has been shaped and influenced by television. This is the primary reason why it is imperative for librarians to involve themselves with video.⁹

Based on the previous points, there is a definite need to review video selections. In Video Policies and Procedures for Libraries, James Scholtz makes the point that, as in book selection, "it is vitally important that the same standards [apply] to judging media quality through written review."¹⁰ He adds that when evaluating review sources:

.. it must be noted that the selection process is not a passive one; it is extremely active. Librarians should not just sit at their desks and select from whatever sources happened[sic] to come across them. Each source should be carefully sought and chosen for need, genre/subject, objectivity, quality of reviews/titles, and its usefulness in fulfilling collection goals and objectives.¹¹

However, Scholtz does not explain the manner in which a librarian is to evaluate a reviewing source using these criteria. Few studies concentrate on the content of book reviews, not to mention video reviews. This is ironic especially when considering the importance of reviews in acquiring any educational material. Two

⁹Scholtz, 4.

¹⁰James Scholtz, Video Policies and Procedures for Libraries. (Santa Barbara, Ca.: ABC-CLIO, 1991), 33.

¹¹Ibid, 91.

long standing reviewing sources in libraries include **Library Journal** and **Booklist**; and video librarians do consult these journals. However, a new source, **The Video Rating Guide for Libraries**, claims that it offers the video librarian more than the standard book reviewing journals, providing a greater number of video reviews and articles on audiovisual news.¹²

The Purpose of the Study

The objective of this study is to determine what these three sources comparatively provide for audiovisual librarians, when analyzing them against the specific criteria in Appendix A. Other issues probed include: determining whether there are significant differences between the reviews in these journals, and evaluating the criteria with which the journals review.

Definition of Terms

For this study solely educational, instructional, or informational titles constituted the sample; all recreational or entertainment titles were excluded. Also, the sample consisted only of titles available in 1/2 inch, VHS tape format.

Limitations of the Study

This study is limited exclusively to three reviewing sources, **The Video Rating Guide for Libraries**, **Booklist**, and **Library Journal**. Therefore, the findings can not necessarily be

¹²Palmer, 163.

generalized to all video reviewing sources.

II

LITERATURE REVIEW

Although the number of video reviewing publications has increased in recent years, studies concerning these publications have been sparse. Most of the literature refers to articles listing reviews, rather than a study of the content of the reviews. Other articles look at the reviewing tool and its uses, but do not delve into the quality of the video's content. Still other resources touch upon useful review criteria which might aid the selector in making an appropriate purchasing decision for his/her library.

At a Chicago conference in 1963, the EFLA (Educational Film Library Association) was asked to develop criteria for film review to assist school librarians in selecting materials for classrooms. The group came to the consensus that a good evaluation needs to answer this question: "Who is saying what to whom?"¹³ In other words, what the director/producer is conveying to the intended audience is of the utmost importance when reviewing a film. This is similar to the author's thesis in a written work. Whichard found that the structure of video reviews is parallel to those of books, with the exceptions of references to imagery, presentation,

¹³Educational Film Library Association, Film Evaluation: Why and How: A Report on the EFLA Workshop January 24-25, 1963, (Chicago: American Library Association, 1963), 29.

acting, and other aspects found only in film.¹⁴

Most of the literature on reviews concentrated on book reviews. For instance, a study carried out by Beth MacLeod evaluates the book reviews featured in **Choice** and **Library Journal**. MacLeod developed a list of criteria to measure certain aspects of a review, such as the quality of the writing, the book's uniqueness, etc., and then explored the differences between the journals' reviews.¹⁵ In total, 2,600 randomly selected reviews, 1,300 from each journal, were analyzed. MacLeod concluded that there were no significant differences between the critical nature of the reviews in **Choice** and **Library Journal**. This was a disparate judgment from the point that she made in the introduction of her study, stating that **Choice's** reviews tended to be more critical than those of **Library Journal**. This study, which Blake describe as "unique,"¹⁶ stands alone because it is the first investigation to examine book reviews qualitatively by criteria. To date, MacLeod's work stands alone in that no other studies have compared the content of reviews in different tools.

Research prior to MacLeod's work (Busha¹⁷ and Ream¹⁸)

¹⁴Mitchell Whichard, "Collection Development and Nonprint Materials," **Library Trends** 34 (Summer 1985): 39.

¹⁵Beth MacLeod, "Library Journal and Choice: A Review of Reviews," **Journal of Librarianship** 7 (March 1981): 27-28.

¹⁶Virgil L. P. Blake, "The Role of Reviews and Reviewing Media in the Selection Process: An Examination of the Research Record," **Collection Management** 11 (1989): 15-19.

¹⁷Charles Busha, "Book Selection in Public Libraries: An Evaluation of Four Commonly Used Review Media," **Southeastern Librarian** 18 (Summer 1968): 99-100.

exclusively measured the quantitative factors of reviewing tools such as the number of reviews published per issue, average length of a review, and promptness of the review to the book's publication date. In an earlier study by Whittaker,¹⁹ ten reviewing sources were examined along a 15-point scale for evaluating a review. Whittaker described a good review as meeting 10 of the 15 criteria.²⁰ Other studies by Sutherland,²¹ Weber,²² and Crow²³ have centered on a genre of reviews, such as children's literature. In a study of reviewer characteristics by Lois Buttlar, attributes such as sex, occupation, affiliation, and geographic location of a reviewer were examined in 15 selected journals.²⁴ Yet other studies focus on reviews of a particular subject's material, such

¹⁸Daniel Ream, "An Evaluation of Four Book Review Journals," *RQ* 19 (Winter 1979): 149-153.

¹⁹Kenneth Whittaker, "The Reviewing of Serious Non-Fiction," *Library World* 63 (May, 1962): 287.

²⁰Blake, 5.

²¹Zena Sutherland, "Current Reviewing of Children's Books," *Library Quarterly* 37 (January 1967): 113.

²²Rosemary Weber, "The Reviewing of Children's and Young Adult Books in 1977," *Top of the News* 35 (Winter 1979): 120-132.

²³Sherry R. Crow, "The Reviewing of Controversial Juvenile Books: A Study," *School Library Media Quarterly* 14 (Winter 1986): 83-86.

²⁴Lois Buttlar, "Profiling Review Writers in the Library Periodical Literature," *RQ* 30 (Winter 1990), 221-229.

as adult trade books.^{25, 26, 27} Tisdel's data suggests that libraries are more likely to own a book if it is reviewed by a major library journal.²⁸ Perhaps the video selections in most American libraries reflect this finding also.

Helen Cyr, Head Audio Visual Librarian at Enoch Pratt Free Library in Baltimore Maryland, complains that video selection is not an easy task:

To locate suitable film and video programs takes a lot of work. There's no convenient film/video-materials-in-print publication available....Film/video reviews and distributors' catalogs are essential resources for locating titles to buy or rent.²⁹

Since that article's publication, a myriad of video reviewing tools are now available, **AV Market Place**, **Media Review Digest**, **Lander's Film Reviews**, **Film News**, **EFLA cards**, **Booklist**, **Film Library Quarterly**, **Educational Scene and AV Guide**, **Library Journal**, **The Video Rating Guide for Libraries**, **Sightlines and Previews**, to name just a few. Collection developers need to know the nature of these tools and what tool(s) would most benefit their decisions on video

²⁵Ching-Chih Chen, "Current Status of Biomedical Books Reviewing: Part IV, Major American and British Biomedical Book Publishers," **Bulletin of the Medical Library Association** 62 (May 1974): 302-307.

²⁶D.H. Nobel and C.M. Nobel, "A Survey of Book Reviews," **Library Associated Record** 76 (May 1974): 90-92.

²⁷Kenneth Tisdel, "Staff Reviewing in Library Book Selection," in Reviews in Library Book Selection (Detroit: Wayne State University Press, 1958), 158.

²⁸Ibid, 158.

²⁹Helen W. Cyr, "Management Tools: Here and Now," **Public Libraries** 23 (Fall 1984): 95-97.

acquisitions.

Information about the Reviewing Journals in this Study

Since this study focuses on the reviews of three resources, **Library Journal**, **Booklist**, and **The Video Rating Guide for Libraries**, an acquaintance with the background of these journals is essential.

In 1876 a publication by the name of **Library Journal** became the first library periodical in the United States to contain book reviews.³⁰ This journal is still a key acquisition for all library collections today, and is considered to be America's leading library periodical. **Library Journal** covers pertinent library issues and is a prominent reviewing tool. The video selections reviewed in its pages are primarily instructional, educational or informational titles, rather than those that are purely entertainment.

Booklist, established in 1905, reviews only those works the reviewer and the journal's editors deem worthy of purchase. It is chiefly used in public and school libraries, although it is considered essential reading for academic librarians also. Materials are not placed on a rating scale, but outstanding titles are marked with a star.³¹ Among the video entries are "review

³⁰Magazines for Libraries. Edited by Bill Katz, Berry G. Richard, and Linda Sternburg Katz. (Providence, NJ: R.R. Bowker, 1992), 701.

³¹Ibid, 205-206.

boxes" which highlight a particular subject area, such as education about drug abuse, aid in pregnancy, teenage suicide prevention, etc.

The Spring of 1990 marked the first year of publication for **The Video Rating Guide for Libraries**. More than 2,000 video titles are reviewed annually and graded on a five star scale. Reviews are written by librarians and other professionals who specialize and have experience in selecting and purchasing videos. **The Video Rating Guide** does not review feature films; the titles selected are either educational or instructional in nature. Each issue also includes timely news on video library collections. This is an expensive tool at \$110 per year, which may be the reason why it has had a sluggish growth in subscriptions. Katz contends that it is geared for libraries which purchase a large number of videos and can justify the expense.³²

Of these journals, Palmer, in his article about current-awareness tools for the video librarian, remarks that **Booklist** and **Library Journal** have "strengthened" their video reviews in recent years.³³ He regards **The Video Rating Guide for Libraries** as an ambitious undertaking that will produce "2,000 signed, critical, and evaluative reviews and ratings by experts...if it is able to deliver on its promises -- [it] should be a major resource for the video librarian."³⁴ (At the time of Palmer's article, **The Video**

³²Katz, et al., 505.

³³Palmer, 163.

³⁴Ibid, 162.

Rating Guide had not gone to press.) "The Guide" is also a recommended reviewing source in The Video Librarian's Guide to Collection Development and Management.³⁵

Many American libraries include reviewing sources in their selection policies. In the Birmingham (Alabama) Public Library, for example, the selection policy states that additions to the video collection are frequently based upon the reviews in professional journals. Journals that were deemed reliable include Booklist and Library Journal, among others.³⁶

In conclusion, while the number of articles about videos have increased in recent years, they have been primarily devoted to providing a bibliographic listing of recommended videos. Few articles and books have focused on criteria for reviewing a video. Concerning book reviews, researchers have spotlighted quantitative characteristics of journals which measure the average length of a review, or the review's release in comparison to the book's appearance on the market. Aside from MacLeod's novel work in the area of measuring book reviews on a qualitative scale, no parallel study has been carried out for video reviews. To accommodate the future explosion in demand for audio visual resources, further research in this area must be pursued.

³⁵Randy Pitman, The Video Librarian's Guide to Collection Development and Management (New York: G.K. Hall, 1992), 34-37.

³⁶Scholtz, 60.

III

METHODOLOGY

The procedure employed to analyze video reviews from the selected journals, **The Video Rating Guide for Libraries**, **Booklist**, and **Library Journal**, was a content analysis. The number of reviews appearing in **Library Journal**, **Booklist** and **The Video Rating Guide for Libraries (The Guide)** were counted for the 1991 publication year. **Library Journal** had the fewest reviews with a total of 324. This number represents the reviews featured in the Video Reviews Section of the journal. The other video review segment, Video Movies, was not included in the count because it highlights only entertainment or feature films.

The total number of reviews from **Booklist** was derived from the Non-Print Materials Section which lists video reviews first followed by reviews on filmstrips, microcomputer software, audio, audio books, etc. **Booklist** printed over 600 video reviews in 1991, with the addition of the selections posted in the subject specific reviewing boxes. As mentioned earlier, these reviewing boxes address concerns such as poverty in America, or violence in the inner city by giving a number of videos on the topic.

The Video Rating Guide lists "over 2,000 reviews every year" on the cover of each issue. For 1991, it had a listing of 2,035 reviews, which didn't include small sections in each issue devoted

to (1) Film & Television or (2) Music because they weren't educational, instructional, or informational works.

To keep this study within a manageable scope, a sample of 150 reviews was taken from each journal. Random samples were attained by arbitrarily selecting a month of the year. Then, starting with that month, a review is chosen based on an increment determined by dividing the total number of reviews for the year by 150. For example, every fourth review in **Booklist** was selected starting from the randomly chosen month. In **Library Journal**, every third review was selected; finally, every fifteenth review of **The Video Rating Guide** was picked. As a result the researcher had to go through the whole year's issues, sometimes having to repeat the procedure (traversing through the year again) in order to obtain a sample of 150 reviews. This method of incremented selection ensured that the derived sample was taken from the total number of reviews for 1991. Therefore, every review had an equal chance of being selected.

(Coding was accomplished by reading each review then filling in the number next to each category on a coding sheet; see Appendix A.)

Categories for the video citation include: Type of video, Producer indicated, Ordering information, Listing of price, Gender of reviewer, Qualifications of the reviewer, and Signature of reviewer. Categories for the review's content include: Comments on the quality of presentation; Comparisons to other works of quality; Comments on the quality of editing, and other technical features; Comments on the producer's work; Comments on the director's work;

States thesis; Indication of the depth of subject treatment; Inclusion of supplementary notes; Recommendations for purchase; Recommendations for the age of viewing audience; Indication for type of library; Length of review; and Indication (if the review is evaluative versus descriptive). These categories were arrived at by some of those listed in MacLeod's³⁷ study and through the reviews themselves.

The video's star rank is a separate category measured during the coding of **The Video Rating Guides'** reviews. This journal gives a five star rating to all of its entries. Works which are considered exceptional receive five stars; those which are poor are given one star. Neither **Booklist** nor **Library Journal** have a rating system. The Rating System category was exempt from the coding of their reviews.

Some of the categories are difficult to code. In a few reviews, the age recommendation covers a broad span, for example, 7th grade to adult. In these instances, the review is coded as Age=Adult because this category includes the largest segment of the recommended audience. However, if the review's content emphasizes that a more specific age segment would benefit the most from viewing the work, then it is coded more distinctively, Age=11-14 intermediary child (i.e., 7th grade).

In coding the Type of library category, the use of library as a generic term was a problem. The review would sight "....a good selection for library collections", "....good for a library's

³⁷MacLeod, 28.

travel section", etc. In these instances, the Type of library was coded as Other/Non-Specific.

IV

ANALYSIS OF DATA

A total of 450 reviews were coded -- one-hundred and fifty reviews from **Booklist**, **Library Journal**, **The Video Rating Guide (The Guide)** published in 1991. Consistently, all three journals gave the corporate producer, ordering information, and video price. All of the reviews analyzed were signed and presented the video's thesis. Beyond these categories, however, the close similarities between the three reviews cease.

Citation

The type of video reviewed by each journal varies. **The Guide** mostly (60.0%) reviews educational titles. A little more than half (50.7%) of **Booklist's** entries review informational videos. **Library Journal** had a close split across the four categories (Educational -- 20.6%, Instructional -- 30%, Informational -- 36.8%, and Other -- 12.6%) and did not show a dense number of reviews in any particular category (see Table 1).

The qualifications of the reviewers also vary widely between the three publications. **The Guide** has reviewers with diverse backgrounds. Some are associate professors in a particular field of study such as education, anthropology, and natural history, while others are part of the ABC-CLIO staff (ABC-CLIO produces **The Guide**). Still others are industrial executives, retired teachers, and editors of magazines. These reviewers were placed in the Other

Specialist category which comprises 26.4% (39) of the total. Librarians are primarily reviewers (69, or 45.6%). Audiovisual specialists constitute 26.6% (40) of **The Guide's** reviewing population.

Librarians and audiovisual specialists encompass over 85% (60 & 68, respectively) of **Library Journal's** reviewers. The qualifications of only one reviewer were not revealed, which appears to be a mere editing oversight. Discerning the qualifications of a reviewer for **Booklist** was much more difficult than with the other two publications. The beginning of the Audiovisual Media section states that some of the reviews are written by its staff editors; the others are written by professional librarians and media specialists. Although all of the reviews are signed, the reviewer's affiliation/position was not identified. All but 11, or 92.7%, are coded in the Other Specialist category, even though this does not accurately reflect the qualifications of **Booklist's** group of reviewers. The eleven in the Not Indicated category represent the professional librarians/media specialists identified as non-**Booklist** staff, because their names do not appear on the title page of each issue (see Table 2).

Female reviewers outnumber males by almost two to one in **The Guide** (93:44), while the female to male ratio is close to 1:1 in **Library Journal** (74:72). Female reviewers far outnumbered male reviewers in **Booklist** (142:8). This ratio is explained by the fact that **Booklist's** reviewers are part of an entirely female

audiovisual media staff who author most of the journal entries
(see Table 3).

Table 1. Type of Video

Booklist	f	%
Educational	40	26.7
Instructional	17	11.3
Informational	76	50.7
Other	17	11.3
TOTAL	150	100.0
Library Journal	f	%
Educational	31	20.6
Instructional	45	30.0
Informational	55	36.8
Other	19	12.6
TOTAL	150	100.0
The Video Rating Guide	f	%
Educational	90	60.0
Instructional	20	14.0
Informational	34	22.0
Other	6	4.0
TOTAL	150	100.0

Review's Contents

The first category acknowledges the video's quality of presentation. All three journals' reviews explicitly state the video's quality. **The Guide** indicates this attribute in over 90 percent (136) of the coded entries, while **Library Journal** (141, or 94%) and **Booklist** (144, or 96%) yield similar numbers. Often, remarks were made about the video's ability to remain timeless, or to indicate its appeal to a large audience. Other less flattering remarks were also made indicating poor quality (see Table 4).

Table 2. Qualifications of Reviewer

Booklist	f	%
Librarian	0	0.0
Audiovisual specialist	0	0.0
Other	139	92.7
Not indicated	11	7.3
TOTAL	150	100.0

Library Journal	f	%
Librarian	60	40.1
Audiovisual specialist	68	45.3
Other	21	14.6
Not indicated	1	<1.0
TOTAL	150	100.0

The Video Rating Guide	f	%
Librarian	69	45.6
Audiovisual specialist	40	26.6
Other	39	26.4
Not indicated	2	1.4
TOTAL	150	100.0

Table 3. Gender of Reviewer

Booklist	f	%
Male	8	5.3
Female	142	94.7
Indiscernible	0	0.0
TOTAL	150	100.0

Library Journal	f	%
Male	72	48.4
Female	74	49.0
Indiscernible	4	2.6
TOTAL	150	100.0

The Video Rating Guide	f	%
Male	44	29.4
Female	93	62.0
Indiscernible	13	8.6
TOTAL	150	100.0

Table 4. Quality of Presentation

Booklist	f	%
Quality mentioned	144	96.0
Quality not mentioned	6	4.0
TOTAL	150	100.0
Library Journal	f	%
Quality mentioned	141	94.0
Quality not mentioned	9	6.0
TOTAL	150	100.0
The Video Rating Guide	f	%
Quality mentioned	136	91.0
Quality not mentioned	14	9.0
TOTAL	150	100.0

Many times the quality of a work is related to the efforts of the director or producer. This was not the case, however, in the reviews analyzed. In this study, **Library Journal** most often acknowledges the producer's work in a video; thirty six entries (24%) had some reference to the creator. **The Guide** with 23 (or 15.3%) and **Booklist** with 20 (or 13.3%) seldom discuss the producer's contribution (see Table 5). As with the Producer category, **Library Journal's** reviews referred to the work of the director more often (53, or 35.5%) than the other two journals did (see Table 6).

Other enhancements of a video's quality include editing and special effects (cinematography, sound clarity, lighting, etc.) and the depth of subject treatment. **The Guide** made most mention of the Editing category (117, or 78%), saving most of the comments on aesthetics for the end of the review. **Booklist** and **Library Journal**

commented on editing in 56% (84) and 36.7% (55) of their entries respectively (see Table 7). The depth of subject treatment, as well as the quality of presentation, is included in most of the entries of all three journals (see Table 8).

Table 5. Comments on the Producer's Work

Booklist	f	%
Producer's work mentioned	20	13.3
No mention	130	86.7
TOTAL	150	100.0
Library Journal	f	%
Producer's work mentioned	36	24.0
No mention	114	76.0
TOTAL	150	100.0
The Video Rating Guide	f	%
Producer's work mentioned	23	15.3
No mention	127	84.7
TOTAL	150	100.0

Whether positive or negative, references to the performance of the actors is made often by all three publications. A number of the reviewed videos did not contain actors. Video tours of beautiful landscape which allow the viewer to watch while riding a stationary bike, or vacation videos which contain a short narration were coded in the No Actors category (see Table 9).

Table 6. Comments on Director's Work

Booklist	f	%
Director's work mentioned	28	18.7
No mention	122	81.3
TOTAL	150	100.0
Library Journal	f	%
Director's work mentioned	53	35.5
No mention	96	64.5
TOTAL	150	100.0
The Video Rating Guide	f	%
Director's work mentioned	13	8.6
No mention	137	91.4
TOTAL	150	100.0

Table 7. Quality of Editing (Special Effects)

Booklist	f	%
Comments made	55	36.7
Comments not made	95	63.3
TOTAL	150	100.0
Library Journal	f	%
Comments made	84	56.0
Comments not made	66	44.0
TOTAL	150	100.0
The Video Rating Guide	f	%
Comments made	117	78.0
Comments not made	33	22.0
TOTAL	150	100.0

Table 8. Depth of Subject Treatment

Booklist	f	%
Comment made	121	80.7
No comment	29	19.3
TOTAL	150	100.0
Library Journal	f	%
Comment made	129	86.0
No comment	21	14.0
TOTAL	150	100.0
The Video Rating Guide	f	%
Comment made	141	94.0
No comment	9	6.0
TOTAL	150	100.0

Table 9. Performance of Actors

Booklist	f	%
Performance mentioned	129	86.0
Performance not mentioned	2	1.3
No actors	19	12.7
TOTAL	150	100.0
Library Journal	f	%
Performance mentioned	112	74.8
Performance not mentioned	4	2.7
No actors	34	22.5
TOTAL	150	100.0
The Video Rating Guide	f	%
Performance mentioned	127	84.7
Performance not mentioned	0	0.0
No Actors	23	15.3
TOTAL	150	100.0

Another reference to video quality includes comparisons made between it and other works of high caliber. **Booklist** makes the most comparisons with 54 (35.8%) of the 150 entries, often referencing and citing other works reviewed in a previous issue of the journal (see Table 10).

Entries were measured to assess if they were strictly evaluative, descriptive, or both. None of the 450 reviews are entirely evaluative because they all describe the premise or topic of the video. In almost every case, the review is both descriptive and evaluative, rather than being exclusively one or another (see Table 11).

Table 10. Comparisons Made to Other Works of Quality

Booklist	f	%
Comparisons made	54	35.8
No comparisons made	96	64.2
TOTAL	150	100.0
Library Journal	f	%
Comparisons made	18	12.0
No comparisons	132	88.0
TOTAL	150	100.0
The Video Rating Guide	f	%
Comparisons made	17	11.0
No comparisons made	135	89.0
TOTAL	150	100.0

Table 11. Evaluative Versus Descriptive Reviews

Booklist	f	%
Evaluative	0	0.0
Descriptive	4	2.7
Both	146	97.3
TOTAL	150	100.0
Library Journal	f	%
Evaluative	0	0.0
Descriptive	8	5.3
Both	142	94.7
TOTAL	150	100.0
The Video Rating Guide	f	%
Evaluative	0	0.0
Descriptive	4	2.7
Both	146	97.3
TOTAL	150	100.0

Each journal includes a high rate of recommendations for purchase of the video reviewed. Although **Booklist** reports that only recommended titles receive print in its publication, some of the reviews do not reflect this. Those entries read like a list of adjectives describing the video's contents, but not persuading the reader that it is a worthy addition to his/her library. As a result, these reviews were coded in the Neither Recommends Nor Discourages Purchase category. Despite this, **Booklist** received the highest ranking of the three journals with 146 (97.3%) entries recommended for purchase. **Library Journal** ranks next with 107 reviews (71.0%) which encourage purchase. **The Guide** finishes last with only 93 (62.4%) recommended entries to library collections (see Table 12). In addition to recommending purchase, **The Guide**

also includes a star system of video rating. Over 73% (109 videos) received either three or four stars. Even though a video might rank a three or better on the star scale, this did not always secure a recommendation for purchase (see Table 13).

The last four categories yield some interesting results. The largest target audience of both **Library Journal** and **Booklist** is adult. Sixty three percent (94) of **Library Journal's** entries are in this category; half (75, or 50%) of **Booklist's** reviews were also coded as adult. Low numbers in the children's categories were expected for **Library Journal** because it produces a publication, **School Library Journal**, which is solely devoted to works for children. Similar to the other journals, **The Guide** has a high number of videos in the Adult category (60, or 40%), but there are also over 50% in the children's categories of Early Childhood through High School Child (see Table 14).

Across all three publications, there is a wide variance in the type of library for which a video has been recommended. Many reviews were coded in the Other/Non-Specific category when the word library was included but the type of library was not indicated (see Table 15).

Library Journal has the shortest reviews of the three journals. Ninety four, or 62.6%, are in the 51 to 100 Words category. **Booklist** yields similar results with 112 (74.7%) being 51 to 100 words. One hundred percent of **The Guide's** entries were over 100 words. Many of its reviews not only consume two columns, but are more detailed about the video's contents than those in the

other two publications (see Table 16).

Table 12. Recommendation for Purchase

Booklist	f	%
Recommends purchase	146	97.3
Does not recommend purchase	0	0.0
Neither	4	2.7
TOTAL	150	100.0

Library Journal	f	%
Recommends purchase	107	71.0
Does not recommend purchase	18	12.0
Neither	25	17.0
TOTAL	150	100.0

The Video Rating Guide	f	%
Recommends purchase	92	62.4
Does not recommend purchase	19	12.6
Neither	39	25.0
TOTAL	150	100.0

Table 13. Star System (for The Video Rating Guide only)

The Video Rating Guide	f	%
One star	8	5.2
Two stars	23	15.2
Three stars	53	35.2
Four stars	56	37.2
Five stars	10	7.2
TOTAL	150	100.0

Table 14. Age of Audience

Booklist	f	%
Early childhood	6	4.1
Elementary child	19	12.7
Intermediary child	17	10.8
High school child	33	22.2
Adult	75	50.2
College	0	0.0
No age recommendation	0	0.0
TOTAL	150	100.0

Library Journal	f	%
Early childhood	0	0.0
Elementary child	4	2.7
Intermediary child	4	2.7
High school child	20	14.2
Adult	94	63.0
College	28	18.4
No age recommendation	0	0.0
TOTAL	150	100.0

The Video Rating Guide	f	%
Early childhood	4	2.7
Elementary child	13	8.7
Intermediary child	27	18.0
High school child	37	24.6
Adult	60	40.0
College	9	6.0
No age recommendation	0	0.0
TOTAL	150	100.0

The most reviews noting videos with supplemental notes came from **The Guide** with 54 (36%). Not including the supplemental notes or guides with the video to be examined is a drawback that many reviewers comment on in the body of **The Guide's** reviews. **Booklist** indicates 36 videos (24%) with supplemental notes. **Library Journal** has only 11 entries (7.4%) with supplemental notes (see Table 17).

Table 15. Type of Library

Booklist	f	%
Public	4	2.7
School	0	0.0
Academic	0	0.0
Special	0	0.0
More than one	3	2.0
Non-specific/Other	143	95.3
None	0	0.0
TOTAL	150	100.0
Library Journal	f	%
Public	18	12.0
School	4	2.7
Academic	16	10.6
Special	4	2.7
More than one	40	26.6
Non-specific/Other	43	28.7
None	25	16.7
TOTAL	150	100.0
The Video Rating Guide	f	%
Public	14	9.3
School	12	8.0
Academic	1	>0.0
Special	2	1.3
More than one	60	40.0
Non-specific/Other	53	35.3
None	9	6.0
TOTAL	150	100.0

Table 16. Length of Review

Booklist	f	%
0-50 words	0	0.0
51-100 words	112	74.7
Over 100 words	38	25.3
TOTAL	150	100.0

Library Journal	f	%
0-50 words	0	0.0
51-100 words	94	62.6
Over 100 words	56	37.4
TOTAL	150	100.0

The Video Rating Guide	f	%
0-50 words	0	0.0
51-100 words	0	0.0
Over 100 words	150	100.0
TOTAL	150	100.0

Table 17. Supplementary Notes

Booklist	f	%
Guide included	36	24.0
Guide not included	114	76.0
TOTAL	150	100.0

Library Journal	f	%
Guide included	11	7.4
Guide not included	139	92.6
TOTAL	150	100.0

The Video Rating Guide	f	%
Guide included	54	36.0
Guide not included	96	64.0
TOTAL	150	100.0

V
CONCLUSIONS

What conclusions can be drawn from this study? According to the EFLA,³⁸ the thesis is the most important statement in a review. All of the journals state the thesis of the work and the depth of subject treatment. Whichard³⁹ notes that a good review refers to imagery in presentation and other visual aspects found only in film. All three of the publications under study acknowledge the quality of presentation in a majority of their reviews and comment on editing quality (presentation and visual aspects).

The Guide makes reference to editing (special effects, cinematography, etc.) in over 75 percent of its reviews. **Booklist** and **Library Journal** do not come close to this rate. For this reason, those who want an in depth description of the video's visual aspects might be more pleased with **The Guide** than with the other two publications.

Yet another indicator of quality, the director's and producer's efforts, is not noted in video reviews from the three journals. The lack of recognition for the producer's and director's efforts is a surprising discovery when taking into account how often their work is mentioned in a theatrical or movie

³⁸Educational Film Library Association, 29.

³⁹Whichard, 39

review.

Booklist's reviewers make more comparisons between the video under examination and those previously reviewed. The example comparisons are listed in an earlier issue of the journal; not one review from a different publication is referenced. Since **Booklist** only reviews titles which it deems worthy of publication, either some censorship is exercised by the editorial staff in selecting videos or those entries published are the best of the pool of reviews. In either case, reviewer bias is expected because the reviewer who wants to be published may give a video a good review, even when it is not deserving of one. Also, those reviewers outside of the **Booklist** circle are part of an elite group. A reviewer might give consistently good reviews just to be included in this prestigious company.

Adults are the most targeted audience in all three journals' entries, although **Booklist** and **The Guide** also have many listings for younger populations. All three publications gear their video reviews to a non-specific type of library rather than indicating the most appropriate. This is a shrewd tactic because it expands their market base to all library types.

While no one journal has risen to the top in all categories, it can be said that the three make a substantial contribution to video reviewing. However, for those librarians who oversee a large collection of videos and want more descriptive entries, educational titles and longer reviews than those of **Booklist** and **Library Journal**, **The Guide** would be a prudent purchasing decision. Not

only is it a good acquisition in terms of the number of videos reviewed, but also because of the broad range of subjects covered and the expertise its reviewers deliver. This is not to say that **The Guide** should be used instead of **Booklist** or **Library Journal**, but that the three compliment each other.

Finally, more research on video's encroachment into American libraries needs to take place. Each year, libraries are expanding or creating video collections, yet the number of studies on video in libraries is minor. Prospective research could answer the question raised by Tisdell.⁴⁰ He asserts that a library is more likely to own a book if it is reviewed in a major library source. Can the same be said for video ownership? Studies focusing on the user and the audiovisual librarian would also be beneficial. Currently, most of the literature is composed of articles listing video selections. Informed decisions cannot be made from these lists, which is impetus enough for further research in the area of video and libraries.

⁴⁰Tisdell, 158.

**Video Reviews: A Content Analysis of Selections
From The Video Rating Guide for Libraries, Booklist and
Library Journal**

Appendix A

Codes for Content Analysis

I. Codes for Review's Bibliographic Citation

TYPE OF VIDEO

- 1 educational
- 2 instructional
- 3 informational
- 4 other

QUALIFICATIONS OF REVIEWER

- 1 librarian
- 2 audiovisual librarian
- 3 other specialist
- 4 not indicated

PRODUCER INDICATED

- 1 indicated
- 2 not indicated

ORDERING INFORMATION

- 1 included
- 2 not included

SIGNED REVIEWS

- 1 signed
- 2 not signed

LIST OF PRICE

- 1 price listed
- 2 price not listed

GENDER OF INTERVIEWER

- 1 male
- 2 female
- 3 indiscernible or undetermined

II. Codes for the Review's Content

COMMENTS ON QUALITY OF PRESENTATION

- 1 quality mentioned
- 2 quality not mentioned

COMMENTS ON PRODUCER'S WORK
1 producer's work mentioned
2 producer's work not mentioned

COMMENTS ON DIRECTOR'S WORK
1 director's work mentioned
2 director's work not mentioned

COMPARISONS TO OTHER WORKS OF QUALITY
1 comparisons made
2 no comparisons

COMMENTS ON QUALITY OF EDITING (CINEMATOGRAPHY, LIGHTING, ETC.)
1 comment made
2 comment not made

STATES THESIS
1 thesis stated
2 thesis not stated

COMMENTS ON PERFORMANCE OF ACTOR(S)
1 performance mentioned
2 performance not mentioned
3 no actors

DEPTH OF SUBJECT TREATMENT
1 comment made
2 no comment

SUPPLEMENTARY NOTES
1 includes instruction guide
2 no instruction guide included

RECOMMENDATIONS FOR PURCHASE
1 recommends purchase
2 doesn't recommend purchase
3 neither recommends nor discourages purchase

RECOMMENDATIONS FOR AGE OF AUDIENCE
1 0-5 early childhood
2 6-10 elementary child
3 11-14 intermediary child
4 15-18 high school aged child
5 >18 adult
6 college
7 no age recommendations

EVALUATIVE VERSUS DESCRIPTIVE REVIEW
1 evaluative
2 descriptive
3 both

RECOMMENDATION FOR TYPE OF LIBRARY

- 1 public
- 2 school
- 3 academic
- 4 special
- 5 more than one type of library
- 6 other/non-specific
- 7 none

LENGTH OF REVIEW

- 1 0-50 words
- 2 51-100 words
- 3 over 101 words

STAR SYSTEM (for The Video Rating Guide only)

- 1 one star
- 2 two stars
- 3 three stars
- 4 four stars
- 5 five stars

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